

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a licensed physician assistant in Juneau, Alaska and have been a healthcare practitioner for 11 years.

I am writing in support of HB 139 to add my voice to those of numerous other healthcare professionals, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Alaska Academy of Family Physicians, who all favor anti-discrimination legislation.

The medical community recognizes the negative health impacts that discrimination causes for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender citizens of our country.

In Alaska there is a high suicide rate, and it is a fact that suicide rates among young people are much higher for those whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual.

Medical science has shown us that sexual orientation is determined by genetics and is not, therefore, a lifestyle choice that an individual makes of their own free will.

To discriminate against a citizen of this country based on sexual orientation is the same as discrimination based on race or gender – it has no place in a civilized society. Our country and the individual 50 states should pass legislation to end discrimination and create a society that is safe and healthy for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation.

Sincerely,

Amanda Arra, PA-C

UAS Health Center

11120 Glacier Highway

Juneau, AK 99801

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I am a licensed physician in Alaska and have practiced in Juneau since 1993. The LGBT discrimination that has been reported to me in confidential exam rooms is too numerous to share with you.

One case was a teen girl who was humiliated and thrown out of a local Juneau restaurant because she kissed her girlfriend inside the restaurant. She and her girlfriend were told to never return to the restaurant again. With her parents' blessings the girl ultimately moved away from Juneau after she reached 18, partly because Alaska was an unfriendly and unsupportive place for her.

It is a well-known fact that we are losing LGBT youth to suicide in large proportion compared to non-LGBT youth. Here in Alaska we have one of the highest suicide rates in the country and it is stripping our villages.

More than once I have been at patients' bedsides here in Juneau waking from a drug overdose attempt and been told by the young person that they tried to kill themselves because they thought they were gay.

Alaska is not a safe place to be gay.

The American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Alaska Academy of Family Physicians all support legislation to end discrimination against LGBT persons, thereby promoting a healthier society.

PLEASE pass HB139 without reservation! Doctors' Orders!

Respectfully,

Maureen Longworth, M.D.

Juneau, Alaska

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 139

TO: Honored Members of the Alaska State Legislature

RE: House Bill 139 relating to and prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression

My name is Marsha Buck and I am the treasurer PFLAG Juneau. PFLAG stands for Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. I am the mother of two adult bisexual daughters, one who is married to a woman and one who is married to a man. I am happy to report that each of my daughters' and spouses' families has given me a granddaughter and a grandson. Families and family ties are very important to all of us.

I would like you to imagine what it would be like if each morning, when you woke up, the first thing on your mind was fear. What would it be like if you had to ask yourself, "Are the places I need to spend time today safe – my job, my apartment? Will I be faced with rude looks or taunts today, and if so, how will I handle that – again? Can I safely go out to lunch with my friends?"

Many of my closest friends are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex and many of them face each day with these fears because they live and work in Alaska, where they are not protected against discrimination based on who they are and the way they were born.

I will never forget when I received a phone call in the middle of the night from a lesbian friend who rented a home with her female partner here in Juneau. She had just been told that she was evicted from her home simply because she was a lesbian. Her landlord said to her, "If I had figured it out before, I wouldn't have rented to you, but now I know what you are up to and you need to get out." No Alaskan should have to neither experience that discrimination nor live in fear that it could happen to them too.

Please support HB 139 for your own family members and friends who are gay, lesbian or bisexual, even if you don't yet know they are – as well as for my daughters. Thank you.

**Marsha Buck
8445 Kimberly St.
Juneau, AK 99801**

April 6, 2013

The Honorable Representative Beth Kerttula
State Capitol Room 404
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Beth Kerttula:

I've lived my entire adult life in Alaska and my nine grandchildren live here. Five of my seven grown children live here. One daughter has a thriving career in Oregon and one son is serving in Afghanistan. I am the Executive Director of a home care agency with branches in seven regions and I vote. My partner and I have been together for almost 29 years. We raised all of our children here in Anchorage and we love living here. However, I am not able to insure my spouse on my medical insurance, which is a hardship on our family. We have both been victims of discrimination from employers who had bias against GLBT persons. I have been harassed on the job by a supervisor due to bias regardless of my award-winning job skills. Prejudice is alive and well in Alaska against GLBT people. I believe HB 139 will assist our family to get the benefit of legal protection when overt discrimination occurs for concrete actions based on bias that has no bearing on one's work. Bias should not interfere with my ability to take care of my family. HB139 can help.

My spouse has medical issues which have resulted in disabilities that did not exist years ago. We are in a precarious position because it is entirely legal to discriminate against me. If I lose my job as sole bread winner, we could lose our home. It is not illegal to fire me simply because I am a lesbian. I can be doing a fantastic job at work but if a new manager is installed, if they harbor bias, I am at risk of losing my job.

When we have experienced bias, it was not a crime. When a landlord harassed us, it was not because we did not pay rent on time or were not excellent tenants; it was because I was "out" in the media and they decided it was open season on us. They towed our vehicle parked in our own parking place. They left ugly notes on the door. They sneaked around our windows. When I went to the building owner, she exerted no pressure on the manager to change. We had to move to protect our privacy. What they did was unethical and immoral but not illegal.

When my school district boss (a new principal) after 7 years of doing a great job decided she had an issue with me, it was not because I was not doing an excellent job. She never considered my skill, productivity, effectiveness, or successes. She told colleagues, "I'm not having anyone with that lifestyle in my building!" What life style do you think she was referring to? I worked hard; I made a positive difference supported by the measurable benchmarks of my job; I was respected by colleagues and a 'go to' leader in the schools; I vote; I pay my property tax; I abide by all the laws; I am a dedicated parent and partner. The people she told this to knew exactly what she meant. She did not want a lesbian on the staff. The other members of the staff who were GLBT were all very closeted and lived in fear as a result of her attempts to discredit or eliminate me. I eventually transferred to another school but what she did was not illegal and my labor contract did not protect me.

My spouse experienced discrimination on her job prior to her becoming disabled. I believe her disability was brought on because of the stress at work homophobia caused and the resulting termination was bias-based and not related to job performance. There is no way to sue for wrongful termination when the boss is biased. Those biases are essentially supported by the law. Could we have risked financial ruin to sue a huge employer? Yes, but we do not have the deep pockets of an airline, thus we are no match for their legal prowess. Being "out" in Alaska can cause one to lose their job, be harassed, lose one's apartment, or worse. [See Identity Reports and Prima Facie documents at Identityinc.org]

I am writing to you in support of HB 139, a bill which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. As a citizen of Alaska, I urge you to support this bill. HB 139 will allow injured Alaskans to come forward and expose the bias perpetrated on GLBT citizens. This exposure will go a long way to help GLBT Alaskans help non-GLBT Alaskans increase their awareness of bias and to change the behavior of persons with biases so the playing field is level for all Alaskans.

I thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion on this matter. I hope that my expressed concern will make a difference in passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Buckley
PO Box 230733
Anchorage, AK 99523
907-349-0046

P.S. My current employer would not be OK with me taking time off work and testifying at the hearing, so this letter is the best I can do at this time.

To Representative Beth Kerttula:

My name is Richard Carter and I am a junior at the University of Alaska Southeast here in Juneau. I am the president of the UAS Gay-Straight Alliance. If I do not get the chance to speak when House Bill 139 is presented, I want it to be known that I am a hardworking student and activist who places in the top percentile of his class. I have worked incredibly hard my whole life to become the best at what I consider one of the most influential professions in society, teaching. I just hope the future that lies ahead of me is one that enables me to teach, inspire and mentor our future generations without the fear of being discriminated against.

I hope we can find common ground and can look past traditional moral stances which are not relevant to the success of and progress towards equality in our society.

Thank you,

Richard

03/29/2013

The Honorable Representative Beth Kerttula
Member of the Alaska State Assembly
State Capitol Room 404
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Beth Kerttula:

My name is Lucy Peckham, and I live in Anchorage. I work several jobs; as a veterinary clinic assistant manager, a live sound engineer, and theatre sound designer. If you have been to Perseverance Theatre, or attended the Alaska Folk Festival you have probably heard me at work.

I am writing to you in support of HB 139, a bill which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. As a citizen of Alaska and member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied community, I am writing to bring the positive effects of this bill to your attention.

In my working life in the arts, there is little discrimination, but outside of the safety of the theatre and music community, it is different. At my workplace, Hillside Pet Clinic, my bosses signed on as a business in support of Prop. 1 last year. Our many wonderful GLBTQ clients needed to know that they were welcome at our business in a public way. Sadly, they are routinely subjected to discrimination at other businesses, as tenants, and as employees.

I believe that passing HB139 will bring Alaska in line with the growing awareness that we are all the same human beings. Alaskans will acknowledge the equal rights guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution of the U.S.A.

I thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion on this matter. I hope that my expressed concern will make a difference in passage of the bill, though I admit I am not hopeful...

Sincerely,

Lucy Peckham
8900 Jupiter Drive
Anchorage, AK 99507-3714
(907)346-4615

Dear Representative Kerttula,

"Alaska is one of 29 states with no laws protecting LGBT people from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation, medical care and otherwise," states the Alaskans Together website. Alaska is not a safe place to grow up LGBT. For 15 years I worked at the Juneau Job Center helping Alaskans get good jobs. In my work I met many LGBT people who were experiencing employment discrimination, especially if they could not easily pass for straight. If they were gay and also a person of color, their employment discrimination was compounded. I know that many transgender Alaskans have had to leave the state because of ongoing negative attitudes, medical care discrimination and concern for their safety.

Alaska needs each of our bright, talented young people. There is so much creative work needed to help Alaska prosper. Our Alaskan economy will suffer greatly if these young LGBT people feel forced to leave the state and find welcoming communities down south.

Here in Juneau, there remains the legacy of a dark period of history in the 1960's when 30-40 gay men were given one-way "Blue or Pink Tickets" and had to leave town immediately. We have heard that so much fear was generated by the JPD and Coast Guard interrogations that those exiled and others who left town because of the witch hunt mentality have been afraid to ever return to Juneau. Alaska has yet to declare respect and protection for this vulnerable and disfavored group of citizens.

As gay Alaskans, it is easy, as the Huffington Post video shows, for our fellow Alaskans to laugh at us. I knew I was a lesbian in 1955 and have had a lifetime experience of disrespect, contentiousness, horrible and ignorant things said about me. Now is a good time for us to request respect, fairness, equal opportunities, and the equal protection that non-LGBT Alaskans enjoy.

Thank you, Representative Kerttula, for bringing forth HB139 which will bring Alaska back into the main river flow of fairness and justice and hospitality toward all of us residents.

Thank you for your courage and vision.

Sincerely,

Lin G. Davis

Juneau resident for 20 years

Representative Kerttula,

Thank you very much for sponsoring HB 139 to try to prevent discrimination based on "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression." This is an important addition to the current anti-discrimination statute.

I figured out I was gay 23 years ago, when I was 19. Looking back, I tried to pinpoint a specific incident of discrimination. Nothing came to mind, so I thought about it for a few days. Unfortunately, I realized that I couldn't pinpoint specifics because it is all around me. As a 19-year-old, I tried hard to run the opposite direction of being gay. I made some really bad choices along the way, including abusing alcohol and putting myself in unsafe situations with men to try to prove I wasn't gay. Wouldn't it be great if today's youth didn't feel the same hesitance, fear and low self-esteem? I need to decide every day who I will share details about my personal life with. Who do I trust to come out to, without fearing some sort of negative reaction? This is my reality, and it has been for my entire adult life. I don't even recognize it anymore.

There are three specific experiences that I'd like to share:

- In the early 90's, the City & Borough of Juneau added similar language to their anti-discrimination ordinance. I remember standing at the back of the Assembly Chambers during a hearing on the issue. The chambers were packed with a group of people wearing red shirts. I was surrounded by this organized group that was passionately opposed to adding language and basic protections for an under-represented minority group. Fortunately, the Juneau Assembly had the strength and conviction to do the right thing. It was very forward thinking at the time.
- Sometime in the mid-2000's, the legislature wanted to pass a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman. There was a poll asking voters for their opinion on the issue. It was a very difficult time. The "vote" didn't mean anything but it brought out lots of vocal opposition to homosexuality. It reminded me that many people still had strong negative feelings towards LGBT Alaskans.
- Last year, the Municipality of Anchorage put a similar anti-discrimination issue on their ballot. I was horrified by the stories I heard about how negative that campaign was. I saw some of the TV ads, and they were awful and truly hateful. Discrimination against LGBT people is alive and well in Alaska, sadly.

As I write this, I feel the need to say that I have evolved to a point where I feel very proud of who I am and the life I've created. I have an amazing 11-year-old daughter. I married my partner of 6 years in February in Seattle. I have surrounded myself with a wonderful group of friends and family who love and fully support my family. Juneau and everywhere else has

pockets of such people, and it's important to mention that. Still, there is much room for progress in the general attitudes towards LGBT Alaskans and that is why HB 139 is so important.

Thank you for your efforts.

Jennifer Mannix
8496A Thunder Mountain Rd.
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Beth;

I would love to testify in favor of HB 139, but at 8am on Tuesday morning I will be doing what most parents of 8 and 6 year olds will be doing: getting my precious children up and ready for school, packing lunches and feeding them a healthy breakfast, so they can grow and learn. My children complete me and they are a gift to their other Mother, and to me, their MAMA. We are so blessed to have supportive families and friends in Alaska. Thank you for all your hard work over the years, but particularly as we struggle through this last civil rights battle in America.

Respectfully,

Jean Craciun

CEO/President

Craciun Research Group

907.279.3982

206.708.4500

April 4th, 2013

Re: HB 139

Dear Ms. Bolling,

I'm writing this letter in support of the merits in House Bill 139, which will allow persons of the LGBT community to be freed of hiding their sexual orientation and receive all protections and support that the straight community has always experienced. I am straight, but since childhood have had friends and experiences with this community. Today, as a musician, I am with many of these folks. I watch them share their many talents, live in committed relationships, raise children and stand up for what is right in our community and the world. They should not be discriminated against any longer and Alaska is the state to do the right thing.

Thank you,

Jacque Farnsworth

907-364-2505

Sara Boesser
PO Box 34285
Juneau, AK 99803
bsara.alaska@gci.net

In support of HB-139

April 5, 2013

Regarding: Support for ending discrimination on the basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Dear Alaskan Representatives:

I'm an Alaskan since Statehood, and I'm writing to urge you to bring Alaska's non-discrimination statute in line with our U.S. Military's policies.

Since the U.S. military now hires, promotes, houses, and otherwise equally treats its soldiers regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, it is only right that when those vets come home, Alaska should continue to treat them as the full and equal citizens that they have proven themselves to be through their service to us all.

Now is the time for Alaska to tune up its non-discrimination laws, so we can include yet another group that continues to suffer due to people's untrue stereotypes about them. Now is the time to once again be a leader in civil rights, as we were before when Alaska granted women's vote and equal citizenship regardless of race.

The old, tired, uneducated, untrue stereotypes that some people continue to use to inaccurately paint non-heterosexual persons as less-than or dangerous are, fortunately, quickly passing away, as the majority of our younger generations affirm they have no problem with equal rights (even marriage) for all, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Regarding those with religious concerns: let churches who oppose us continue to discriminate against us in the practice of their religion -- the same as they are already allowed to discriminate on the basis of gender or religion itself, even though gender and religion are protected by the human rights statute (i.e., for example, Catholics can legally discriminate by not hiring women or non-Catholics as priests).

But in the public realm, all Alaskan citizens should be treated equally. Now, far too often, those of us who are not heterosexual or gender-normative are not safe in hiring, jobs, housing, accommodations, financing, and credit. And why? Just because of who we love and which gender we perceive ourselves to be. Those two conditions in no way affect how we serve and participate in our Alaskan communities.

We are an integral part of the fabric of Alaska's law-abiding, working, volunteering, industrious, racially and religiously diverse people. We are of every ability and age and parental and marital status. We expect to be treated equally in our state, and hope you will help make that possible by voting for HB-139.

Sincerely yours,



30 March 2013

The Honorable Representative Beth Kerttula
Member of the Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 404
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression - HB 139

Dear Representative Beth Kerttula:

Thank you for standing up for all Alaskans and ensuring we all have the same rights and protections. As a member of the LGBT community, it is very disheartening to know that I am "second class" in a state that I have not only called home but have invested an immense amount of time and resources towards making it better for everyone. All I ask is to be treated the same as my fellow non-LGBT Alaskan. After the loss of One Anchorage, it was not long before we began to get reports of people being refused services because they were LGBT. Two young ladies, graduating from high school, wanted their high school graduation pictures together - several photographers denied them - yet they did it for their straight clients. I personally was judged on my ability to do my job in the late 90's in Alaska partly because I was a gay man.

Today, I am writing to you in support of HB 139, which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. As a citizen of Alaska and member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and allied community, I am writing to bring the positive effects of this bill to your attention.

If passed, HB 139 will ensure all Alaskans, no matter sexual orientation or gender identities have the same, I say again - the same rights as all other Alaskans.

I thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion on this matter. I hope that my expressed concern will make a difference in passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

Trevor Storrs

8831 Rendon Dr/Anchorage AK 99507

State of Alaska
House of Representatives

My partner and I are writing in support of House Bill 139, protecting citizens from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, financing or credit based upon sexual orientation.

We are a lesbian couple in our 60's. We work at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks and at the Fairbanks North Star Borough. While officially, as employees of the state and a political subdivision of the state, we have been "protected" against sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, we both have experienced the unofficial "passing over" for job promotions and exclusion from decision-making that comes with personal bias against people of a different sexual orientation.

Alaskans, as individuals, have long supported the right to be different; to think and live their lives as they see fit. It is our right to be different. The State of Alaska needs to make lack of tolerance against the law in employment, housing, public accommodations and financing.

Kerry Quillin
Jean Richey, Ph.D.

Dear Representative Kerttula,

I am writing to personally express my support for HB 139. If we were all better human beings, this legislation wouldn't be necessary; we would judge people by the content of their character, not the clothes they wear or who they love.

Passage of HB 139 makes an affirmative statement that discrimination on the basis of fear or hate is wrong. Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression is wrong – in the same way that discrimination based on skin color is wrong.

As an employer, I am looking for skills, experience and whether a person is a good fit with the organization and the program. I find it impossible to understand how a person's sexual orientation, either homosexual or heterosexual, has anything to do with those characteristics. I don't employ them because of their personal sex lives.

I hope that you can enlist your fellow legislators to support common sense. We have so many more important and real problems to deal with.

Thank you very much, and good luck.

Anna Nelson

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Anna Nelson

Executive Director

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